

JERSEY

BEAT

VOL. III NO. V

ISSUE 19

75¢



vipers

Bodies In Panic

1985 &
Still On The Beat!

Human Switchboard

THE BANDABLES

KRAUT

Jon Klages

PUNKS

MODS

1984 Revisited



JERSEY BEAT

THE FANZINE FOR UNACCOMPANIED MALES AND
GIRLS LEFT OFF THE GUEST LIST

VOL. III NO. V

ISSUE 19

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SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Cathy Miller (photos); Start!,
Warning, Glitterhouse (artwork);
Steve Fallon, Bill Ryan, Judy -
Music/Kitchen, Brad Morrison,
everybody who sent records &
tapes, all the bands...

Sorry to start the new year with bad news, but after 2 years of doing this thing for free, we're going to have to start charging a modest sum for mail-order copies. We'll continue our policy of distributing the 'zine free at those stores & clubs that support us with advertising; but increased postage and printing costs mean that we won't be able to mail 200 free copies away anymore. We hope you enjoy our efforts enough to cough up 75 cents when we ask for it.

Next issue is JB #20 and marks our third anniversary. We'd like to do something special. Any ideas? Write and let us know!

And now on to 1985...



JOHN EC 1984

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KIDS, WIN A WEEK IN SPACE CAMP



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Rebels without a clause

by Jim DeRogatis

One ingredient above all others makes the Human Switchboard the best unsigned band in New York today.

"We have soul," says keyboardist Myrna Marcarian. "We bought it at Woolworth's."

You can buy almost anything at Woolworth's, except a record contract. For that, the Switchboard moved east from their native Ohio last year, settling in Hoboken in an attempt to break down the doors of record company intransigence and get that Big Contract.

Switchboard is hardly a newcomer to the scene; the band dates back to Cleveland in 1977. Guitarist/vocalist Bob Pfeifer lived next door to drummer Ron Metz. "We had goofed around in bands all through high school," Pfeifer said. They played the music they grew up with: "Stones, Motown, Mitch Ryder, the Dave Clark Five, Herman's Hermits, Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis..."

Pfeifer met Marcarian at Syracuse University (Lou Reed's alma mater) and the Switchboard was born when the two returned to Cleveland. Their first live gig wasn't until 1979, but the band had released an independent EP produced by Krokus Behemoth (aka David Thomas of Pere Ubu fame) two years earlier.

"We saw all the stuff that was happening in the summer of '76 and said, 'Hell, we can do that,' so we put this record out and there was all this critical praise; then we went back to school," Pfeifer recalled. "I was going to graduate school but I hated it. We decided we'd try being a band."



Human Switchboard's no-contract blues

TEN REASONS FOR LIVING IN 1984 JIM DEROGATIS

1. Dumptruck - anywhere, anytime, live or on record.
2. The Feelies
3. Maxwell's and John Courage are
4. "Unsatisfied" by the Replacements
5. "I Am With You"/"Happy Feeling"
- Mod Fun's 45
6. The Calamities
7. Husker Du, live at Maxwell's,
6/23
8. I Often Dream Of Trains
- Robyn Hitchcock's LP
9. Lester Bangs and the Velvet
Underground (eternal sources of
inspiration)
10. 29-way tie: the Long Ryders,
live Del Fuegos and The Longest Day,
the Trypes and Yung Wu, Cyndi
Lauper's "She Bop," Chinese food, R.
Stevie Moore, Gutbank, Spiral Jetty,
the return of Doonesbury, WPRB,
Frank O'Toole and WFMU, Let It Be,
Tiny Lights, The Big Express by XTC,
Husker Du's "Eight Miles High," Bill
Ryan (my hero), the Human
Switchboard, Nightmare on Elm
Street, the dBs, those artsy guys
from Athens, Matter, the Bongos'
three nights at Maxwell's, Wire, the
Hoboken Reporter, Steve Fallon, Kurt
Vonnegut, and the Love Pushers.

Pfeifer is an anomaly for a rock 'n roller. "Sometimes I think too much and that's why I talk to myself," the one-time philosophy major said. "There was a time when I was more interested in finding out whether I exist or not than in finding out what I wanted to do with my life."

On stage, the soft-spoken intellectual disappears. As a frontman, Pfeifer is part Lou Reed, part James Brown, dancing lithely around the stage, playing slashing guitar lines, sweating out brilliantly written lyrics in a voice just good enough for rock and roll.

Myrna Marcarian is a cool contrast to Pfeifer's wildness. Her keyboards fill out the band's sound and her sweet, melancholy voice is near-perfect. Lately she's been grabbing the spotlight too, stepping out front and letting loose.

Behind the two singers, drummer Ron Metz and bassist Michael Jared Nickerson provide cool, tight rhythms: Metz crisp, precise, and on-the-beat (the best white funk drummer next to Anton Fier), Nickerson sliding through the grooves. On special nights, Bernie Worrell (P-Funk, Talking Heads, Nona Hendryx Band) on clavinet, but lately he's been busy on tour with other bands.

The Human Switchboard is no longer the same poppy garage combo they once were; the band has embraced funk and country influences and incorporated them with who-knows-what to form a distinctive style.

"I think it was a natural evolution," Pfeifer said. "It's when you make these conscious changes - now we're going synth-pop, right - that things get fucked up. It's always the same thing: it's what we feel."

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

by Jim DeRogatis

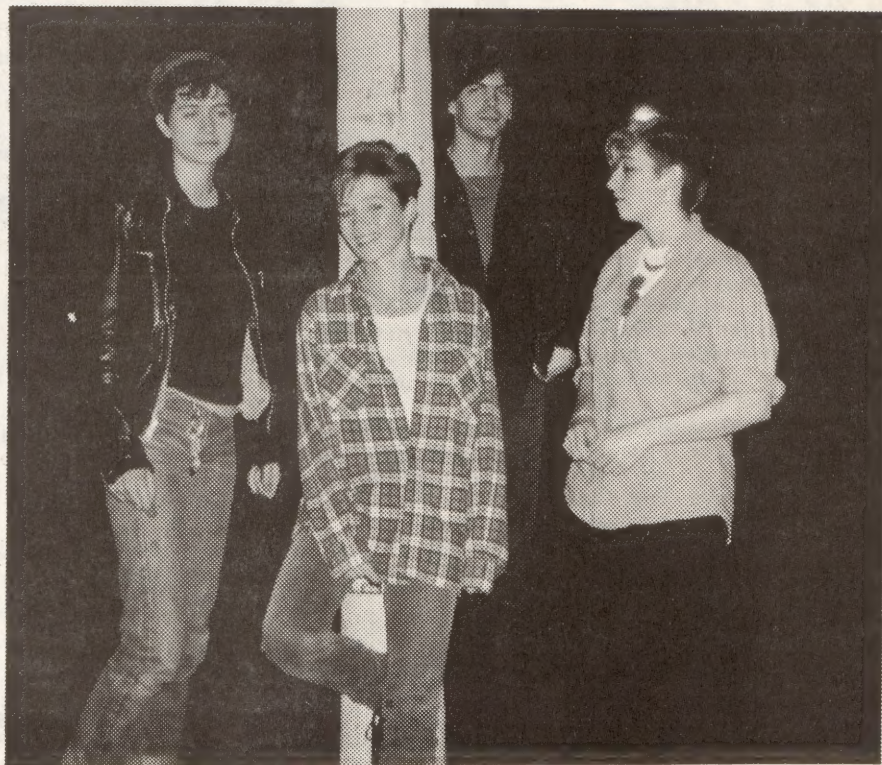
In the few months that Hoboken's Gut Bank has been gigging around, they've won nothing but well-deserved praise and the hottest word-of-mouth in town. Gut Bank is one of the few bands that's mastered that Lower East Side, sonic anguish, scream-till-ya-puke intensity while eschewing the artsy junk. The band's songs work because they're (a.) movers (no swansong sludge) and (b.) humorous (check your NYU art student pretensions at the door) and (c.) melodic (as in "actual songs buried in the noise").

Kudos go to principal songwriter Karen Kuhl, whose soulful vocals and twisted guitar are at the heart of things. This girl says it and MEANS it when she tackles originals like "Behind Bars," a torturous dirge that builds into a hellbent rave up ala' Sonic Youth. And nothing tops Gut Bank's token cover, "Heartbreak Hotel," where Kuhl reaches new depths of manic/depression; first she wails "Feel so lonely I could die," then she turns around and laughs about it.

Kuhl's bandmates play with energy and enthusiasm, starting with Pia Palmisano's thrashing tom fills and a rhythmic precision that some folks (like me) would kill for. Artcore veteran Mike Korman proves his mastery of the Keith Levene School of Guitar Growl and smiles like he knows Gut Bank is the best band he's ever been in. Alice Genese also sings and contributes an ounce of sanity with steady, melodic bass riffs.

Recording and more gigs are in the works, but they've already started '85 right - opening for Husker Du on New Year's Eve at Maxwell's and holding their own quite nicely. Remember you heard it here first: Gut Bank rules in '85.

NEWCOMERS ARE NEAT!



Gut Bank

Switchboard

"We all love playing music, that's why we've been around so long," he said. "The business may get discouraging but the playing never is."

The "business" has been more than discouraging for the Switchboard during the last seven years. After two indie records, they released 1981's *Who's Landing in My Hanger* on Faulty Records and went on tour. When they came back, they found their record company had folded. Nevertheless, the band retains their optimism.

"I'd like to do this forever," Marcarian said. "I can't imagine any other lifestyle."

"Some guy in another band called me an old person and a has-been the other day. I was really insulted. I work my butt off. If I'm an old person, how come I can drive 12 hours, sleep on somebody's floor, then go on stage and give everything I've got for an hour and a half?"

Pfeifer promises a record this year, one way or another. "We just signed a management agreement and I think we'll have a record out and/or a record deal within the year," he said. "We have a great deal of stuff on tape that we'd like to release - stuff that we with Mike Thorne as demos for Polygram. Plus there's always new stuff."

"I think we're going to have a deal and I think we're going to have a successful record. I think we have hit songs," Pfeifer said.

Coming soon to your town: the *new* Human Switchboard record. On sale - of course - at Woolworth's.

Dramarama

Dramarama, *Comedy*, ? Records (PO Box 1652, Wayne, NJ 07470)

Dramarama synthesize everything cool about the Seventies in the days before they coined the word Punk: Eno, Lou Reed, Ziggy Stardust, the Stooges, and Dolls merge in a style vaguely familiar yet fresh and vital. The five songs on *Comedy* are mini-anthems bolstered by inspired playing and a BIG production.

Side One starts with "Visiting The Zoo," an acidic Orwellian invective resembling prime Iggy, and "Transformation," pure power-pop with glittery edges. Yet another version of "Femme Fatale" (originally covered on the band's 1983 EP) kicks off Side Two, this time with a close take on Uncle Lou's vocal and a lush arrangement that's kinda *Coney Island Baby* meets *Big Star*. "All I Want" is a scream into the void that climaxes in a Johnny Thunders-ish solo and a synth explosion, giving way to the stark, pseudo-psychedelic "Emerald City," which features a great falsetto vocal and lines like, "I'm lost in a sweet dream/I'm living on chocolate ice cream." (Hey, Jim, what about your diet? - Ed.)

I could gush on but I'll limit myself to this: *Comedy* by Dramarama is brilliant. Buy it.

- Jim DeRogatis



BODIES IN PANIC

Bodies In Panic

by Bruce Gallanter

Bodies In Panic, This Ain't Rock N Roll, Mutha Records, PO Box 416, West Long Branch, NJ 07764.

Too much! Immense anger and anguish are at the center of this blisterin' LP, with a totally twisted, yet sadly real, vision of modern life. Abortion, murder, and a world gone mad provide the theme of this record, a sampler of the constant confusion and hypocrisy surrounding us. Anti-army, anti-big business, and anti-any organized beliefs that will supposedly save or protect us all. Enjoying dead people because they can no longer complain is rather extreme, but it does make a point - complaints are bull unless one takes the time to try and change things.

Most tunes are short, mean, ugly explosions of music & vocals. A fat rhythm team with bludgeon subtlety is provided by Wayne Russo on drums and Gavin McNett on bass. Kyle "Panic" Eaves' tortured voice often squeals and rants with an ultra-effect. Lead guitarist Fred Buccholz wails his spasto mutant leads, which unexpectedly go in many directions at once. Totally haywire.

From the hyper sludge of "Salesman" to the slower metallic death dirge inserts of "Isa," this sounds as if it's on the verge of falling apart. "Bored With Action" is just the opposite and "Ariel Sharon" is a mind-blasting mess. The Black Sabbath cover is the least interesting song here. Need I say more?



PUNK

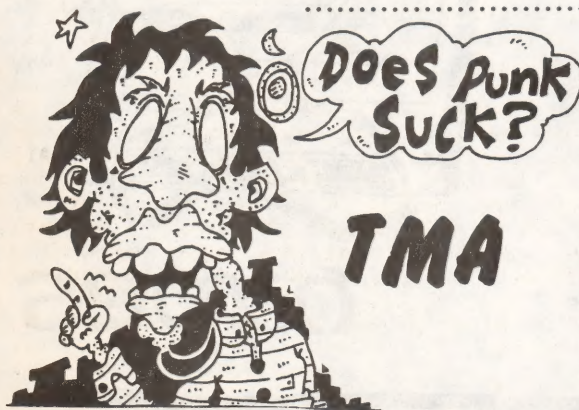
KRAUT



By Jim Testa

Kraut, Whetting The Scythe, Cabbage Records (PO Box 1424, Flushing, NY 11352)

Kraut's first-rate songwriting needs either a lyric sheet or production clear enough to make Davy Gunner's vocals intelligible. Lacking both, this new LP loses the immediate one-two punch that made Kraut's first album such a knockout. With the lyrics a garble, Doug Holland's powerful guitar parts sound like heavy-metal runs on first listen. But if the songs themselves are weaker here cut by cut than on 1983's An Adjustment To Society, the overall LP represents an ambitious and important breakthrough - or maybe break-out would be the better term, since Kraut is obviously desperate to escape the deadend label of "hardcore band" at this point. The boys do it with this record! Doug Holland's wide-ranging command of power riffs propels these cuts in a new direction: Less chaotic and noisy than thrash, but with punk's speed and energy intact, this material captures heavy-metal's fist-raising bravado and new-wave's melodic intricacy. Johnny Feedback's drumming has never been more on: fast and precise beyond belief, he's the rocketfuel that makes this missile soar.



What's For Dinner, TMA

Jimbo Records, PO Box 203, Ansonia Station, NYC 10023

Jersey's Ramones-cloned thrashers TMA grind and grunt through 20 (count 'em) 20 speedy musical rabbit-punches on their debut album, occasionally hitting a nerve or funnybone ("Surf Nazi" and "Nancy" both earn their share of guffaws) but more often just poking their fingers in society's eye. Mike Demko's one-dimensional buzzsaw guitar and Dave Garfield's monotone vocals work best in short doses (like their two funny cuts on the Dirt Hardcore Compilation last year); on an lp's worth of tunes, the band apes the Ramones relentlessly without the versatility or depth (or wit) to make it all work. I've got nothing against a band that reminds me of the Stooges, but let's make it Iggy & Co., not Moe, Larry & Curly Joe.

- Jim Testa

Young Turks 4-song cassette

Upon returning from their fairly successful U.K. expedition, Billy Snow and Millicent Kittay resettled in Hoboken and formed yet another version of the Young Turks, this time reuniting with their original 1981 rhythm team of bassist Tony Shanahan and drummer Jeff Miller. This tape is the first of several planned cassette-only releases. Each tune here showcases Billy Snow's talents as a poet/lyricist.

"How Do I Stop?" - Millicent and Billy chant, voices sailing together; one quivering and whining, the other with soft strength, blending beautifully. Billy's electrified 12-string sounds more distinctive all the time. Here it reminds me of early Gun Club's traditional American folk/blues.

"Herd Of Cattle Dancing" - The gently gripping, uptempo acoustic strumming recalls some of the better Sixties folk/rock flourishes. The Turks' sly, trance-inducing magic is still quite apparent, but it is this song's quiet desperation that grabs me.

"The Dangerous One" - Billy's sensuous slide guitar groove sets the pace once again. The restrained, layered distortion on the solo and outro have a most eerie effect. Strangely hypnotic.

"Christian Darkness" - A very cool funk line underlies Billy's unique chordings, enhancing the feeling of inner darkness. An earlier version of this song featured a screaming guitar solo; now Billy creates a thick, unified mood throughout.

The essence of truly great poetry is to tap the almost invisible spirits that move us all and then supply verbal images to those spirits, making them more easily recognizable to those sensitive enough to care. All four of these tracks are fine examples of this art. And despite my somewhat excessive analysis, each has a strong dance groove at its center.

- Bruce Gallanter

Objects, 4-song demo cassette (Bound To Sound, 418 Madison Street, Hoboken, NJ)

As mainstays of that "other" Hoboken scene (Beat'n Path, Court Street, etc.), the Objects don't win points as critics' darlings but manage to attract a sizable hometown following anyway. Their melodic, reggae-flavored popcraft is enhanced on this new demo by bright production, ringing guitars, a dollop of funk ("Love Zombie"), and one song - "Don't Deny Love" - that sounds like a FM hit. Not hip, maybe, but solidly entertaining and commercial; and unlike some Hoboken bands, I don't think the Objects would mind those two compliments at all.

- J.T.

the Disturbed

THE DISTURBED

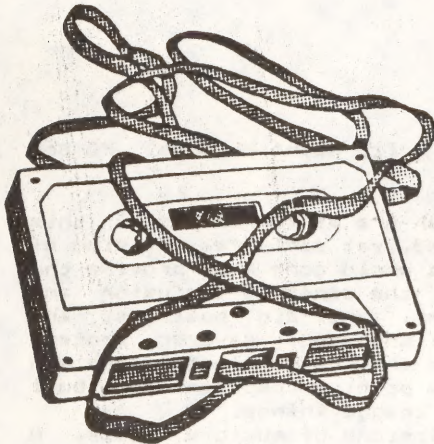
Another demo from Princeton, NJ's teenypunk Shaggs, the Disturbed. This time, WPRB's Sally Jacob provided studio time and lent a hand as producer; the result is a much cleaner, more professional sounding demo than this group's first basement tapes, but don't worry, kids... Songs like "Never" and "I'm Dying of Boredom" will never sound slick. What makes this combo so appealing is their totally unselfconscious enthusiasms; so what if they can barely play their instruments, if guitarist/vocalist Rookie's voice is changing (often in the mid-song), if drummer Ben White occasionally misses a beat? The songs are catchy, the lyrics simple but heartfelt, and they even attempt an instrumental. A+ for effort.

- J.T.

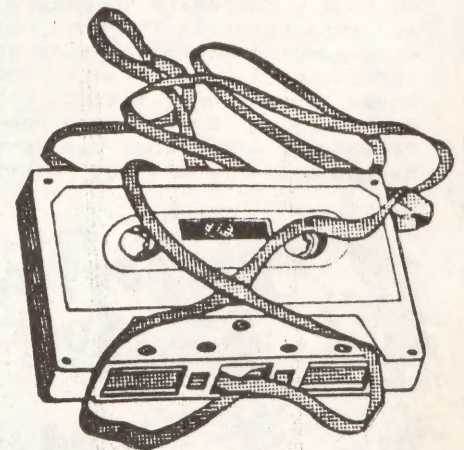
MOD FUN 8-song demo cassette

Dig the Motown flash of "Movin' & Groovin'," the turned-on psychedelia of "Eyes Getting Louder," the Monkees-shine pop of "A Minute Twenty." Mod Fun's growing up, their days of Jam covers and punky teen anthems behind them, and this eight-song demo - destined to be their debut mini-LP on Midnight Records - explodes with riffs and signatures inspired by sources as diverse as Syd Barrett and the Bongos, the early Who and the Vipers. "Fade To Mirror" and "The American Dream" show a greater lyrical complexity too. And the music? Chris Collins' fills and rolls punctuate these songs like machineguns in a Jimmy Cagney picture. Bobby Strete's bass, throbbing and melodic by turns, provides a solid bottom, while Mick London's Rickenbacker - channeled through a plethora of jerry-rigged effects - fires riffs and short leads with a newfound love of distortion (inspired, no doubt, by his stint in the avant-noise collective, the Love Pushers). Style, youth, and energy make this "mod" combo modern fun for the whole family. Groovy.

- Jim Testa



mod
Fun



tapes

BANDABLES

NEWCOMERS
ARE NEAT!

Nineteen-year old Jerry Kitzrow and Amy Miller may look like a pint-sized version of Let's Active, but their band, The Bandables, plays it a little straighter. "People remark on the resemblance all the time," says Jerry, whose Smurfy locks and chirpy tenor vocals make him a dead ringer for a young Mitch Easter. "But we're not as spacey as they are. Let's Active is more dreamlike, while we rely on riffs a little more."



A little more? The Bandables rely on riffs like the Grand Cooley Dam relies on water. With giddy Dave Varenka on drums and cool, catchy basslines from Scott Casher, the Bandables are New York's newest teen idols. So far, there's a 45 ("Cynicism"/"Love Lies Down") on their own Galt label and a demo with some nifty newer stuff that's even better: Catchy, hooky power-pop driven by Jerry's zippy guitar, Scott's melodic bass, and the band's secret weapon, Jerry and Amy's note-perfect harmonies.

"I met Amy in high school and it was really surprising when we started to sing together," recalls Jerry. No wonder. Like a few pop legends that come to mind - Simon and Garfunkel, John and Paul, the Everlys - this pair of Port Washington cuties have a set of perfectly matched pipes: Two sing and one voice comes out - a beautiful, resonant two-part harmony. Both Jerry and Amy write, influenced, they say, by the likes of the Bangles, Tommy Keene, and the Shoes; Amy's stuff owes something to the Pretenders, as well, and there's definitely a hint of Let's Active's multi-colored fluff in there. "Anything that has a twist but is still basic pop" is how Jerry describes his favorite music. That sums up the Bandables awfully well too.

-by Jim Testa

The Bandables, "Cynicism"/"Love Lies Down," Galt Records (209-80 18th Avenue, #5F, Bayside, NY 11360)

DAS DAMEN Too Hot For Hollywood

by Jim Testa

Das Damen. The name bites but the band rocks. Remember the Misguided, Long Island's hardcore misfits who took a curious turn toward the garage in their last days? Well, they're back, sort of... Drummer Lyle, Dave on bass, and Alex on guitar have hooked up with Jim (ex-Youthanasia) on lead vocals and guitar. It's not hardcore and it's not garage, though; Das Damen sounds like vintage '77 Britpunk me, all that great powerchord speedrock like 999, the Undertones, and TRB, but Lyle insists it's just '72 funrock revisited.

Whatever, as befits a motley grabbag of ex-hardcores, it doesn't tinkle or chime like R.E.M. "Waiting For The Beat," the monster that kicks off the set and the band's demo, kicks in with metal thunder and then explodes into a power-paced vocal that reminds me of The Dictators' *Go Girl Crazy*. Which ain't bad.

At the band's first-ever gig (one of those awful CBGB audition nights), the band stuttered and stalled between songs, blew a few riffs, and never quite got it all together. Jim's a cool frontman but his moves waffle between hardcore skanking and Mod Funnish leaps and kicks. The band's demo has a few problems too; everyone, especially Jim on lead vocals, sounds tentative, as if they didn't want to sing too loud and offend the neighbors.

Still, the songs work. Alex still rules on guitar and Lyle wins "Most Improved" kudos on drums. Give them a few months to work out the kinks and Das Damen may just be "The Next Big Thing." Or at least the next Handsome Dick Manitoba.



Denise Ranallo

Louie Louie & the Lost Hombres EP, Rebel Riot Records (PO Box 2793, Elizabeth, NJ 07208)

Like a lot of bands from the Central Jersey/New Brunswick area, Louie Louie takes bar band fundamentals and reworks them into a newer-wave format. You could add the Smithereens, Soul Attack, and the late Rockin' Bricks to the list of these club-rock bands, champs of a good, solid rock 'n roll that frat boys dance to. Never more than a riff away from Chuck Berry (or, at their waviest, Tom Petty), Louie Louie & Co. make music so basic and timeless (rock and roll is here to stay, it seems) that it can't be faulted. I just can't get too excited about it, either.

- J.T.

NOVEMBER HEAT, Certain General
Sourmash Records

At their best - mostly when they're singing about sex and girls - Certain General get that slinky, sensuous New Yawk clubland groove down perfectly. "Voodoo Taxi," for instance, does it for me: danceable, raunchy, insistent, insinuating nastiness masquerading as rock music. It's only when the band gets serious or turns mysterious, with songs about concentration camps and lyrics like a William Burroughs novel set to bad riffs, that the Generals go off. Then, Parker DuLany's penchant for melodramatics runs amuck and it all sounds like bad Doors. Mostly, though, this new LP (on the Sourmash label, shared by several other NY bands) smokes, certifying the CG's as legitimate heirs to the title of lizard kings of clubland.

- Jim Testa

JERSEY BEAT'S TOP LOCAL RECORDS OF 1984

1. Trypes, *The Explorers Hold*
2. Mod Fun, "I Am With You"/"Happy Feeling"
3. Adrenalin O.D., *The Wacky Hi-Jinks of Adrenalin O.D.*
4. Kraut, *Whetting The Scythe*
5. dB's, *Like This*
6. Samhain, *Initium*
7. Mourning Noise EP
8. Vipers, *Outta The Nest*
9. Cheepskates, "Run Better Run"/"Xtra Collestrial"
10. Outta Place, *We're Outta Place*

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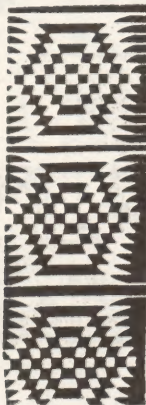
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ONE BLOCK FROM
P A T H



outta sight!



MICK LONDON'S GROOVIER 10 THINGS
IN 1984

1. Listening to Syd Barrett
2. Discovering the 3 O'Clock (ta, John)
3. Paisley shirts
4. Seeing the Fleshtones at...
5. Maxwell's
6. (Vox's) Battle of the Garages
7. The Pandoras (at Irving Plaza)
8. Reading Absolute Beginners
9. Getting "Outta Place" at the Dive (R.I.P.)
10. Buying my own Georgie Fame singles

Besides: The Creation, The Move, The Chosen Few, capuccino at Reggio's and strawberry milkshakes (with real strawberries) at the Daily Treat...& Mod Fun's first 45!!!!

WOW!

The Vipers, Outta The Nest!P, PVC/Jem Records

This LP is brilliant, the Vipers are soooo cool, you can't imagine how much I like this. And I was starting to worry that the Vipers were trading in their cool R&B (Rolling & Beatles) sound for the "authentic" garage sound. But no need to fear, Outta The Nest is the best-yet from these cats. Don't get me wrong, I do think the Vipers are real Primitive, but they're much better than you'd be able to tell from their (badly recorded) 1st single on Midnight (the East Coast's Vox). And live, the band has all their harmonies & sounds down pat, even better than the Fleshtones! Jon Weiss is like a young/early Mick Jagger, with his cool handclaps, foot stomps, and stage moves. HEY! The Vipers are where it's at, cat. If they don't get a real record contract outta this, BOY, there are no talent scouts. On to the grooves...

"Nothings From Today" starts it (WOW, just like Battle of the Garages, hmmm). It's a different version, you know, that sounds even cooler; less "Ticket To Ride" than before. "Now I Remember" swings, it's my fave. It gets just like the F-Tones "American Beat" at end and grooves so much my speakers just shake & shout 'till the Revolver-type finish. "Cheated & Lied" has goeen even more Mersey/DC5-ish in the transformation from Plexus to PVC, & "Dark As My Day" still reminds me of the Yardbirds. "Tears Only Dry," "Borrowed Time," and "Ain't Nothing Like Her" are all in the swingin' 6T's pop style (i.e. ringing guitars, harmonies galore, and more hooks than you've ever heard!). Jon even plays great harmonica on "Ain't Nothin." "We're Outta Here," the last cut, was way-better on the 99th Floor flexi=disc. There's just too many guitars on the LP version, unlike the flexi (which had maybe 2 raw guitars and lotsa vocals); it useta sound like the Kinks!

The Vipers say they're "psychedelic;" well, nothing on this LP brings to mind good olde Syd, nor the Move nor the Creation. It's more like glorious garage-pop, done up in the 6T's way -- BUT one thing's for sure: This record SWINGS!!!

INCAS Records

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jon klages

by Howard Wuelfing

Jon Klages Band, In A Dream, Coyote Records

This here's a primo example of self-styled '84 vintage Hoboken pop. I imagine that this is what Rick Springfield performing Glenn Morrow's idea of R.E.M. songs would sound like (spiked with the occasional flurry of skittish Verlaine guitar from this combo's raison d'être.) Who could ask for anything more??



Helen Wheels Band, "Carry My Own Weight" - Flexi-Disc

As the first example of (I kid you not) "Heavy Muscle Rock," this new cut by Helen Wheels Band may make history or, if you react to lady bodybuilders like some folks, it may make you gag. On a brighter note, now that her band is imitating Def Leppard instead of Status Quo, at least Helen's music sounds a lot better - good headbanging fast metal with melodies and power changes. Do you think she could talk Capt. Lou Albano into managing her? Just imagine, Cyndi Lauper with muscles!! AAUGGHH!!!

- Metal Mike Ferris

Soul Attack!

By Mick London

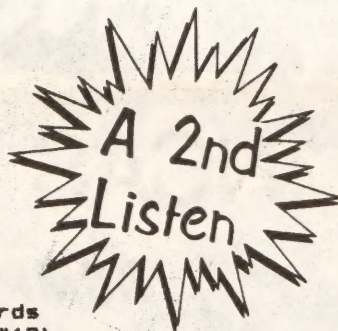
SOUL ATTACK EP, Change Records
(Originally reviewed in JB #18)

Now, I'm not trying to make any enemies here, BUT...

Rock & Roll?? If "Rock & Roll" it is then where does that put bands like the Beatles, Monkees, Kinks, or even the Jam? Certainly not with the likes of Greg Kihn, Tommy 2-Tone, or The (sickest) Producers. That brings to mind the question: Where does "Rock & Roll" end and "Pop-rock" begin?

As far as the monicker, I don't hear soul (Stax/Volt, R&B, Motown) one bit. If, in fact, there is any such influence, where are the Edwin Starr "Huhs!" or the Otis Redding "Da-da-da's"? I didn't hear 'em! I can see the "power-pop" (more like "pop-rock" but who's counting?) however. BUT it's more like 7-T's stuff. The Sixtees swung, remember? (even I do!!!) Where's the anger? Where's the aggression? Where's the youth?? I'm not saying that The SOUL ATTACK are bad at what they do, BUT (last time, I promise) if they're "Rock & Roll" then the Beatles must be an Oi! band...Please excuse this outburst...your turn.

Mick London is the editor of START!, lead singer/guitarist for Mod Fun, and an frequent contributor to Jersey Beat. Opinions expressed above are not necessarily those of the management.



REVIEWS

Salem 66, "Across The Sea"/"Pony Song," Homestead Records

In certain circles (the pipes 'n notebooks 'n leather-jackets crowd), this would come as sacrilege, but in the past I NEVER SAW ANYTHING SPECIAL ABOUT SALEM 66. Red Buckets and Dumptruck covered the same ground better. Comparisons to the Slits and the Raincoats were completely off the wall; the Salems play moody but poppy folk/rock.

This new A-side, though, really grabbed me. "Across The Sea" is a haunting tale of stepping out on your own, but it's also about lost love. The chorus and signature guitar lines are sad but hummable, the interplay between Judy Grunwald's guitar and newcomer Robert Wilson's forms the perfect backdrop for Beth Kaplan's melancholic vocal (the real reason this song shines).

"Pony Song" was annoying on the Salem 66 EP and still is, but so what? "Across The Sea" is wonderful; I wish they'd let Beth Kaplan sing more often.

- Jim DeRogatis

JIM TESTA
1984: Orwell That Ends Well

1. Replacements, Let It Be
2. Husker Du, Zen Arcade, "8 Miles High"
3. R.E.M., Reckoning
4. Long Ryders, Native Sons
5. Del Fuegos, The Longest Day
6. Tynes, The Explorers Hold
7. Red Kross, Teen Babes From Monsanto / Nomads, Outburst / Vipers, Outta The Nest
8. Cheepskates, "Run Better Run" 45
9. Pleased Youth, "Sure We're Pleased" cassette / Mourning Noise EP / Samhain, Initium / The Wacky Hijinks of Adrenalin O.D.
10. dB's, Like This

Speaking of Mod Fun, Midnight Records has inked them to produce an LP follow-up to their well-received debut 45; expect it this Spring...Coyote Records is prepping a compilation disk with local compunks like Trigger & the Thrill Kings, the Clintons, Last Roundup, and maybe a vintage nugget from Alex Chilton...Chilton, by the way, has been in Minneapolis producing demos for the Replacements...People always ask about the Bongos, so: Yes, they're still together, just keeping a low profile until the February (we hope) release of their new RCA lp, when they'll finally start touring again; meanwhile, Jim Mastro has produced an EP for his brother John's band, Tiny Lights, and Rob Norris was back in the studio working with Winter Hours (formerly Ward B)...Congrats to Beat Rodeo, signed to IRS...Bassist Rick Wagner has left the dB's; at presstime, the band was still looking for a permanent replacement...Buy Our Records hopes to get that Jersey hardcore compilation out very shortly...Dave Scott is back full-time as Adrenalin O.D.'s drummer, his part-time gig as Pleased Youth's lead singer having been snuffed by the PY's as they felt Dave's commitment to A.O.D. would keep him from touring and recording with Pleased Youth on a 100% basis; the 'Youth picked up some teenage headbanger to scream lead in the meantime...Trenton's Futile Effort opened for the Circle Jerks at the Court Tavern in January and got a good response; when someone in the crowd objected to the drummer's jock-y Adidas t-shirt he obliged by whipping it off and throwing it at the heckler...

THE BEAT

Fanzine news: Matter has moved again; new address is P.O. Box 1060, Hoboken, NJ 07030, and the new issue is finally out, \$2 ppd. with a great cover story on the dB's and features on Tetes Noires, Dumptruck, Butthole Surfers, lots more...Donny The Punk will be the new NY scene reporter for Maximum Rock N Roll; hardcore bands looking for "Maximum" coverage can write Donny c/o Jersey Beat and we'll pass it along; also look for Donny's profile of Adrenalin OD in an upcoming Flipside... When P.R.I., a popular record-pressing plant on Long Island, was raided by the D.A. recently, the cops seized more than the allegedly bootlegged Springsteen & Hendrix lps there - they also confiscated half of the new Mutha Records releases, including the Brunfuss lp and the long-awaited 2nd Secret Syde lp, Erebus...Mark "Mutha" Chesley reports that the "evidence" will hopefully be returned soon...

Welcome back and hello, 1985. First up, some changes around the Jersey Beat office. Pattie Kleinke won't be doing POP World anymore - her decision, not ours, why not write us and try to convince her to come back? - so we're looking for anyone who'd like to take a shot at writing about some of the local pop talent. Maybe we should run a classified:

HELP WANTED

Witty, well-informed would-be rock critic willing to work for free wanted to review local (NY/NJ) pop records, bands, performances, etc.

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Y'all should also be aware that 4/5 of this merry collective here has started a band called the Love Pushers (Messrs. Testa, London, Wuelfing and DeRogatis being the guilty parties) so anything you read herein about that band (or Mod Fun, for that matter) should be taken with some healthy skepticism. It'd be conflict of interest if any of us made any money at any of this.

1. REPLACEMENTS - LET IT BE, Live at Maxwells and Irving Plaza, "20th Century Boy," always fun.
2. HUSKER DU - Live at Maxwells and the Ritz, ZEN ARCADE, "8 Miles High," always on.
3. R.E.M. - In big arenas or small clubs, always great live; Reckoning; that amazing interview on MTV's "The Cutting Edge;" always promoting the music and the scene above themselves.
4. DEL FUEGOS, DOGMATICS, SALEM 66, LYRES, The Rat, Chet's, Dave Wyckoff, Rocco Cippolone, Jim Barber, Riding The Blinds, NEATS... In a word, Boston.
5. DUMPTRUCK - Live at Maxwells, D Is For Dumptruck, nice fellas on the way up.
6. LONG RYDERS - Live anyplace, and Native Sons
7. John Scher and MTV's "Rock Influences" shows at the Capitol - A good idea, well done, credit due.
8. Fanzines: Matter, Flipside, Maximum Rock N Roll, The Offense Newsletter, Conflict, Warning. All great.
9. Clubs: Maxwells (home away from home), CBGB (a year of great bookings), Irving Plaza (nicer than ever, lots of good shows); New Brunswick's Court Tavern; club djs - Guy Ewald, Maxwells; Jack Rabid, Ritz, Rock Hotel, and Danceteria; Georgia Hubley, Maxwells.
10. "Psychedelic Weekends" at the Dive; hardcore matinees at CBGB, esp. A.O.D., Major Conflict, and Kraut; Bruce Gallanter's alternative music fests; and publishing Jersey Beat.

live!

SECRET SECT'S SPACE FUNK



ROCKIN' ROLLO'S 1984 TOP 10

1. Thomas Dolby - The Flat Earth
2. R.E.M. - Reckoning
3. Ricky Lee Jones - Magazine
4. Let's Active - Cyberess
5. Gun Club - The Las Vegas Story
6. Pleased Youth - "Sure, We're Pleased" - cassette
7. Bruce Cockburn - Stealing Fire
8. Peter Blegvad - Naked Shakespeare
9. Chris Stamey - Instant Excitement
10. Elvis Costello - Goodbye Cruel World

...and 10 1984 Unknowns to Check Out

1. Cocteau Twins, Head over Heels
2. Wipers, Over The Edge
3. 10,000 Maniacs - Secrets of I Ching
4. Barracudas - Endeavor to Persevere
5. Mark Stewart & Mafia - Learning to Cope...
6. Cassiber - Beauty & The Beast
7. Dabnielle Dax - The Jesus Egg That Wept
8. 100 Flowers - Drawing Fire
9. Terry Haggerty - One Fine Day
10. Justin Love - Rockola

by Bruce L. Gallanter

This is the modern world and this is the global village, where anything can be borrowed and altered to fit one's own vision. Secret Sect are a good case in point. They've chosen a number of the better, stronger elements found in progressive musics - funk, punk, psychedelic, electric, ethnic - and created their own unified style. On one level, they play hypertense space funk ground in pounding tribal rhythms; while their lead guitarist, Jay Walk, pulls out all stops with short, controlled bursts of a dense, wailing/sailing sound. There is even some jazz/fusion influence apparent in the band's highly structured clarity of ideas.

Last year, as a guitar/bass/drums trio front by vocalist Dave Burke, they pulled off some superb, startling (U2-like) gigs at the Jetty and CBGB. Since then, after several personnel changes have left them in a state of flux, they appeared at the Dive with a new five-man lineup, including an amplified sax and a hot new bassist.

And still amazing, no doubt. Part of their distinctive sound is due to the bassist providing much of the melody - throbbing thick twisted funk. Vocalist Burke, since departed, had a fairly strong, almost-British voice, not unlike Secret Syde's Jon Davies. The bass and electric sax combined most effectively into one strong bottoming sound.

Two songs really stood out: "What Is The Meaning?" is a totally fresh funk derivation, with trembling, hypnotic central theme. The sax & guitar blended into a Beatleish Eastern-type drone. Jay's guitar inserts sighed, groaned, and glowed in swirling colors, with dizzying effect. "Permanent" is a space funk with a Nubian beat, an otherworldly sound mass.

The electrified sax was just an experiment and presently Secret Sect are looking far & wide to find a vocalist who can improvise at length. A tough position to fill, but if you know of anyone interested, they can contact the band c/o Jay Walk at (201) 673-2397. And be prepared for a new Secret Sect.

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REVIEWS

STISISM EP

Mutha Records, PO Box 416, West Long Branch, NJ 07764 (#3)

Spit, pus, and adolescent jism aimed at hardcore's perennial targets - politics, the radio, dorks, and girls who drive you nuts - all cranked up at hyperspeed with Mark Chesley's best production job to date. Loud, bright, clear, and cutting, Stisism knocks me out; they take all the blather about "Is it hardcore/punk/metal?" and make you wonder why anybody would care.

- J.T.

"Big Fun"/"Sun Time," The Breakers
Dolphin Records, Box 8744, Durham, NC 27707

Hey, daddy-eau! Two cuts worth of shameless, shimmery Beach Boy coppage from Trenton's Breakers, abetted by folks of mucho cool-o credentials. Production by pop-svengali Alan Betrock (uncoverer of Blondie, dBs, and Marshall Crenshaw, as well as inventor of New York Rocker), guest guitar by Peter Holsapple, and arrangements & vocalisation by ex-Chilton henchperson Fran Kowalski.

"Sun Times" is the better cut, being a purist's homage to pure genius: Brian Wilson at his almost-matured best. The A side tries to interpolate some more contemporary rock n roll influences, which has the same effect on quality as adding Blue Nun to 20-year old French wine. Buy for the flip and play it to death.

- Howard Wuelfing

The Gyros EP, Fake Doom Records (PO Box 1698, New York, NY 10116)

Rockabilly may have faded from the spotlight with the demise of the Stray Cats but the faithful will not be denied. Witness this boppin' 5-song EP from Jersey's Gyros (formerly The Rockin' Gyros). Each cut rocks out with an early Elvis, slap-bass beat, happy, danceable, and true to the genre. Not for everybody, but if you head for the "Rockabilly" bin of your fave record shop with any regularity, check this one out.


- J.T.

WOW!

Amor Fati, 4-song EP, Flesh Records (PO Box 5040, North Bergen, NJ 07047).

We don't hear many indie punk 45's from North Bergen 'round here, especially ones as raw and gutsy as this, "recorded with a 4-track cassette deck and a 15 dollar mike." Unfortunately, Amor Fati's four tracks back themselves into a corner. The extremely Lydonesque whining and yelping, the throbbing bass, the screeching guitar and wild drums...all spell P-I-L. Derivative? Hell, yeah. But not totally unlikeable.

- Jim DeRogatis



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by Bruce 'Rockin' Rollo' Gallanter

In mid-1984, John "Bear" Graham, an international percussion explorer, added his unique rhythms to the Young Turks at the same time that John "Lunar" Richey had begun expanding his poetic recitations within that group into more musical forms. When the Turks officially split up, Bear and John continued their poetry/percussion duets and expanded them into the Lunar Bear Ensemble, recruiting other members from local bands, especially New Brunswick's immensely popular Frozen Concentrate.

Lunar Bear Ensemble

Poetic Percussion



The ensemble gigs infrequently, but we were lucky enough to catch one of their magical performances late last Fall, when the lineup included Tina Maschi (guitar), John Brueche on bass, and Brad Hall on drums. Besides Bear, other percussionists included Dorthis Collura and Richey Montanez.

Richey has a performing voice that exudes friendliness and lacks any pretension. He is a gifted poet, with a natural presence.

The Ensemble opened this performance with the lovely mesmerizing prayer of "Verdant," and later did the Eno-esque drifting haze of "Equinox" - both quite enchanting. Even more magical was the free-floating flow of "Caged Cats," a strangely beautiful piece. During "The Effects of Low Leel Consciousness," Bear stalked the room with his berimbau (looks like a hunting bow), transforming the space into an African village. Richey evoked the spirit, longing to be free, by hitching away from New Brunswick, only to be returned there a short time later.

The highlight of the set was their unique version of the Buzzcocks' "I Believe." With its newly infectious beat, some there had to dance. A great song, with some of Pete Shelley's most effective lyrics, questioning what we really believe in. Richey's singing soared, pushing him/us closer to the edge.

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Swans... Sounds like monsters

by Howard Wuefing

Swans, *Cop*, K244/Some Bizarre

How do you explain the Swans to a 6 year old? Well, if you're looking to merely answer inquiries as quickly as possible and proceed to a surcease of parent-kiddie communication, you could say, "It sounds like monsters."

But if the youth's imagination is not in gear at the time and the logic-functions are present, you say, "It's someone making a sound about hurting." Then the query may come, "Is he getting hurt?" "Well, not actually while the music's happening. He's singing about pain that's already happened." Or I guess it might be about anticipated pain to boot. Come to think of it, that's what appeals to me as an adult about the Swans... how well they express pain on the sonic-aesthetic level instead of the merely thematic, like most conventional rock music. The Stones' bitching about blueballs in "Satisfaction" is not set to a noise that even comes close to adequately conveying the desolation of physical/emotional/psychic isolation 'n frustration. Swans, though...

Yeah, *Cop* kinda hurts to wallow in. It's unrelentingly harsh and sluggish - drenched in feedback, glorying in deliberate dissonance. Even I, who's sought out and exalted in the discordant for the better part of the decade, find it creepy at times. Cool! Yeah. This cuts through the numbness and indifference and apathy and dead flesh and mental callouses and makes contact with those cerebral ganglia that register ecstasy.

Fuq! *Cop* this. One to delight children and troublemakers of all ages.

Howard Wuefing's
Top 10 Things You Can Do
Repeatedly
Without Added Expense or
Much Effort

1. Replacements, "Answering Machine" (LP cut)
2. Swans, *Cop* (side 2)
3. Tynes, *The Explorers Hold*
4. Womack & Womack, "Baby I'm Scared of You"
5. Prince, 1st three cuts of *Purple Rain* LP
6. dB's "Amplifier" video
7. dB's, "She's Got Soul" (LP cut)
8. Husker Du, *Zen Arcade* (sides 1 & 2)
9. Smiths, *Hatful of Hollow* (side 1)
10. Einsturzende Neubauten "2x4" (ROIR cassette); *Drawings of Patient O.I.* (LP)

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on the outside



As mentioned last issue, I put together yet another alternative music festival (folk-oriented), in & especially for NJ. A great deal of time & work went into this event, which featured many artists often mentioned in these pages, and once again, attendance sucked. For shame. I get the feeling that we are writing in a vacuum, as only a handful of people - besides the musicians - support this 'scene.' I even got flak from local folk-music dj's for not presenting 'traditional' folk music. The event was a musical success nonetheless, showcasing a diverse array of talent. These events will continue, because this is what is in my heart! but be brave, dear reader, give a chance to some local treasures.

With 1984 behind us, I would like to thank a few people who have also worked hard to make the Jersey underground pop scene as strong as it is: Steve Fallon, whose Maxwell's gigs are the most consistent (alternative) double bills in the NY/NJ area, and whose Coyote label is also a ray of sunshine! Perry Feigenbaum, whose great Tuesday night series at the Jetty is going into its third year and who often pulls off some great double (and triple) bills! and Paul Decolator (and dj Pat Duncan of WFMU) who brought the cream of often-unrecognized national & local hardcore greats to various venues. And finally, my partner, Michael Belian, who has been continually supportive of anything I/we have put together and who plans to do much more in '85.

As also previously mentioned, we are putting together a Third Alternative Music Festival - the New Jersey Noise Contingent - for late February/early March. This time the event will be held on two consecutive nights at Mod Art Studios in Rahway. The current lineup includes the Mopeds, Cyanamid, Truly Fiendish, Thought Cancer, Children in Adult Jails, Scornflakes (?), Gutbank, Psychodrama, Suburban Bohemia, and Mad Mary Williams.

A while back, I was impatient enough to slag a few locals who appeared at the Jetty; time has proven me wrong in many cases and I would like to apologize to some of these groups, whose more recent gigs pleasantly surprised me by their maturing ideas: the Lavines, Expresso Tango, and best of all, Tiny Lights, who blew me away (esp. the cellist and guitarist).

"On The Outside" will be regular feature of Jersey Beat. Anyone interested in information regarding the NJ Alternative (Noise) Fest or would like to submit art/noise/avant-garde projects for review should write: Bruce Gallanter, c/o Jersey Beat, 418 Gregory Ave., Weehawken, NJ 07087.



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